

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9596
INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 0791

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: PPP NAMES ELECTION CANDIDATES

1. THE PPP, AS IT MOVES INTO HIGH GEAR FOR THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN, HAS ANNOUNCED ITS NOMINEES FOR THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES. THE LISTS GIVE SOME VALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT PARTY AS IT RETURNS TO THE POLLS IN AN ATTEMPT TO RENEW ITS MANDATE FOR ANOTHER FIVE YEARS.

2. PPP LEADERS HAVE BEEN QUOTED IN RECENT WEEKS AS SAYING THAT OVER 60PERCENT OF THE PARTY NOMINEES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WILL BE NEW FACES. WITH THE RELEASE OF THE NAMES OF PARTY NOMINEES, THIS PREDICTION HAS PROVEN TO BE ACCURATE. IT IS DUE IN LARGE PART, HOWEVER, TO THE INCREASE IN THE SIZE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FROM 144 TO 200 GENERAL SEATS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE MAJORITY OF THE SERVING PPP MEMBERS HAVE BEEN REWARDED WITH RENOMINATION, WITH BETWEEN 60 AND 70 PERCENT OF THOSE SITTING IN THE DISSOLVED ASSEMBLY BEING GIVEN TICKETS. THOSE RENOMINATED INCLUDE ALL THE PPP CABINET MINISTERS AND ALL THE
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MINISTERS OF STATE EXCEPT FOUR, NONE OF THEM OF ANY PARTICULAR NOTE.

3. THE LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY INDICATES THAT PARTY CHAIRMAN BHUTTO FOLLOWED HIS USUALLY SOUND POLITICAL INSTINCTS RATHER THAN CONCERNING HIMSELF WITH QUESTIONS OF IDEOLOGICAL PURITY IN CHOOSING THE NOMINEES. THE PARTY HAS

MADE SOME ASTUTE POLITICAL CHOICES AND HAS SELECTED GENERALLY YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE AND POLITICALLY INFLUENTIAL INDIVIDUALS TO RUN IN CONSTITUENCIES WHERE CLOSE RACES ARE PROBABLE. FOR EXAMPLE, PROFESSOR GHAFOR AHMED, A PROMINENT OPPOSITION LEADER, REPRESENTS A CONSTITUENCY IN KARACHI COMPOSED MAINLY OF FAMILIES THAT IMMIGRATED FROM INDIA AT PARTITION (MUHAJIRS) AND VOTED OVERWHELMINGLY AGAINST THE PPP IN 1970. THE PPP HAS NOMINATED A SON OF THE FIRST PRIME MINISTER OF PAKISTAN- LIAQUAT ALI KHAN WHO WAS A MUHAJIR AND IS STILL VENERATED BY THE VOTERS IN THE CONSTITUENCY-TO OPPOSE GHAFOR. SIMILARLY, THE OPPOSITION HAS NOMINATED NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER SHERBAZ MAZHARI TO RUN FROM A PREDOMINANTLY PATHAN CONSTITUENCY IN KARACHI. THE PPP CONSEQUENTLY NOMINATED A PROMINENT PATHAN BUSINESSMAN RESIDENT IN KARACHI-MALIK HAZAR KHAN-TO OPPOSE HIM.

4. APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF OF THE CANDIDATES BEING GIVEN PPP TICKETS FOR THE FIRST TIME ARE OLD PARTY MEMBERS, THOSE WHO WERE EITHER FOUNDING MEMBERS OR WHO JOINED IN THE EARLY 1970'S. THE OTHER HALF ARE RECENT CONVERTS TO THE PPP. ALTHOUGH THE OLD PARTY MEMBERS MAY NOT BE PLEASED WITH HALF OF THE NEW TICKETS GOING TO LATECOMERS TO THE PARTY, THEY WILL ACQUIESCE IN THE DECISION HAVING VERY LITTLE OTHER REALISTIC POLITICAL CHOICE.

5. MOST OF THE RECENT CONVERTS WHO RECEIVED TICKETS REPRESENT THE PRE-1970 TRADITIONAL POLITICALLY POWERFUL CLASSES. MANY ARE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MUSLIM LEAGUE, LARGE LANDOWNERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS WHO SEE THEIR FUTURE IN THE PPP RATHER THAN WITH THE WEAK OPPOSITION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE NEW CLASS OF PPP

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CANDIDATES HAS A DISTINCTIVELY MORE "RIGHTIST" FLAVOR THAN THE 1970 NOMINEES. THE TREND TOWARD LEFTIST RHETORIC WITH AN INCREASINGLY CONSERVATIVE AND "RIGHTIST" PARTY MEMBERSHIP CONTINUES IN THE PPP.

6. THE CHAIRMAN'S CRITERION OF ELECTIBILITY RATHER THAN IDEOLOGY FOR CHOOSING CANDIDATES IS ALSO SHOWN BY THOSE WHO WERE DENIED TICKETS FOR REELECTION. NONE OF THE SITTING MEMBERS DENIED RENOMINATION HAS BEEN DROPPED BECAUSE HE DOES NOT SUPPORT THE PPP MANIFESTO AND PROGRAM. MANY HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF TRADITIONAL SINS SUCH AS CONSPICUOUS CORRUPTION AND VENALITY-AS OPPOSED TO INFLUENCE PEDDLING WHICH IS AN ACCEPTED PART OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN POLITICS. OTHERS NEVER VISITED THEIR CONSTITUENCIES AND SEVERAL, SUCH AS KHURSHID HASSAN MEER AND AHMED RAZA KASURI, HAVE INCURRED THE CHAIRMAN'S WRATH BY BEING TOO CRITICAL OF HIM AND HIS POLICIES AT VARIOUS TIMES.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 0791

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7. THE PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO CHOOSING CANDIDATES AND THE MORE CONSERVATIVE PROFILE OF THE NOMINEES IS FURTHER SEEN BY THOSE WHO RECOMMENDED AND REVIEWED THE PROPOSED NOMINATIONS BEFORE THEY WERE SENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER. (WE UNDERSTAND THAT BHUTTO HAS PERSONALLY APPROVED NOT ONLY ALL THE PPP NOMINEES FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, BUT FOR THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES AS WELL.) POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN ISLAMABAD BELIEVE THAT THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF BOTH THE PPP PARLIAMENTARY BOARD (RECOMMENDING CANDIDATES) AND REVIEW BOARD (FINAL REVIEW BEFORE SUBMISSION TO THE CHAIRMAN) WERE DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARTY NASIR RIZVI, WHO IS CONSIDERED A "RIGHTIST"; RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS MINISTER KAUSER NIAZI, ALSO REPRESENTATIVE OF CONSERVATIVE VIEWS IN THE PARTY; MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND NIAZI ALLY MOHAMMAD HANIF KHAN; THE PM'S COUSIN AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO (WHOSE INFLUENCE WAS LIMITED TO CANDIDATES FROM THE

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SIND) AND MINISTER OF EDUCATION PIRZADA. NONE OF THE SELF-STYLED "LEFTIST" IN THE PARTY WERE INFLUENTIAL IN CHOOSING CANDIDATES,

AND THE LEADING PROPONENT OF "SOCIALISM" IN THE PPP-
SECRETARY GENERAL MUBASHIR HASSAN-WAS NOT GIVEN A TICKET.

8. THE PPP ENTERS THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN WITH A SLATE OF
GENERALLY ATTRACTIVE AND POLITICALLY POWERFUL CANDIDATES WHO
REPRESENT A FORMIDABLE OBSTACLE FOR THE OPPOTION TO
OVERCOME IN ITS ATTEMPT TO MAKE A RESPECTABLE SHOWING AT THE
POLLS. THE PARTY'S CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGE HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED
BY THE LACK OF OPPOSITION CANDIDATES IN SEVERAL CONSTITUENCIES.
ALTHOUGH NOMINATION PAPERS CAN BE SCRUTINIZED AND WITHDRAWN
UNTIL JANUARY 29, OUR UNOFFICIAL COUNT NOW INDICATES THAT
NINE OF THE 43 PPP CANDATES FROM THE SIND (INCLUDING THE
PRIME MINISTER AND MUMTAZ ALI BHUTTO) AND THREE OF THE SEVEN
FROM BALUCHISTAN WILL STAND UNOPPOSED IN THE ELECTION. THE
OPPOSITION, AS OF NOW, WILL BE CONTESTING FOR ALL THE SEATS
IN THE PUNJAB AND FRONTIER.

9. SEPTTEL FOLLOWS ON OPPOSITION LINE-UP. CONSULATE
KARACHI ASSISTED IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS CABLE.
BYROADE

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